

VA Privacy in Action Speaker Series Event

IDENTITY THEFT SCAMS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Event Resource Guide

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Privacy Service, thank you for attending the "Identity Theft Scams and How to Avoid Them" Speaker Series event on February 24, 2021. We hope you found the information presented to be insightful, meaningful, and thought provoking. Below is a list of helpful resources that may assist you in your daily efforts to protect Veterans' and their families, as well as consumers' privacy as a whole.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Contact VA Privacy Service with Questions: VAPrivacyCommunications@va.gov

VA Identity Theft Help Line: 1-855-578-5492 | Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET

<https://www.va.gov/IDENTITYTHEFT/>

New Year, Same Scams: Tips and Tricks from AARP to Fight Fraud in 2021: <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/83191/new-year-same-scams-tips-tricks-aarp-fight-fraud-2021/>

Protecting Yourself Against Identity Theft and Fraud: <https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/financial-literacy/ID-theft-fraud.pdf>

About Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (Community Care): https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/about_us/POI/poi_fwa.asp

Fraud Avoidance for Veterans: <https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/bwn-fraud-avoidance.pdf>

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Veterans and Imposter Scams: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/11/veterans-and-imposter-scams-0?utm_source=govdelivery

Veterans, Servicemembers, and Fraud: By the Numbers: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2019/11/veterans-servicemembers-and-fraud-numbers>

Stop Veteran Charity Scams (Video): <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/media/video-0163-stop-veteran-charity-scams-psa>

Avoiding Scams and Rip-Offs: <https://www.ftc.gov/faq/consumer-protection/avoiding-scams-rip-offs>

FTC Imposter Scams: <https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/office-inspector-general/ftc-imposter-scams>

Fraud Avoidance for Veterans

Veterans and their benefits are the targets of many types of fraud, to include mail, telephone, and online fraud. VA is actively working to prevent these incidents, but you are the best line of defense against this criminal activity.

Here are some tips about being contacted regarding your Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits:

1. If you receive correspondence from VA concerning a claim, and you don't remember filing a claim, contact VA directly at 1-800-827-1000 to confirm details. 
2. VA will never charge you for processing a claim or request a processing fee prior to releasing benefit payments.
3. VA will never ask for your personal information via email. This includes verification of your SSN, address, and/or bank information. VA only addresses personal information via mailed letters.
4. VA may check in with you by phone, email, or text message. If you are unsure about any call, email, or text, confirm details with VA directly at 1-800-827-1000.
5. VA does not threaten claimants with jail or lawsuits. 
6. Be cautious of telephone numbers on your caller ID. Scammers can change the telephone number (spoofing) to make a call appear to come from a different person or place. 
7. When in doubt, hang up and call VA directly at 1-800-827-1000, or call your Power of Attorney representative (DAV, VFW, etc.).
8. If you receive an email or letter from VA notifying you that your direct deposit information was updated, or that your eBenefits account information was updated, and you don't remember doing so — immediately contact VA at 1-800-827-1000. Do not ignore the email or letter. It could be your first sign that your information has been compromised.

VA  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

To learn more about protecting yourself from fraud, and how to report it, visit <https://www.va.gov/oi/hotline/default.asp>, or go to VA.gov and search "Office of Inspector General". For more details on how to avoid scams, go to <https://www.ftc.gov/veterans-targeted-benefits-scams>. Download free financial scam awareness resources at <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/helping-prevent-scams-targeted-veterans/>.

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www.va.gov/privacy



U.S. Department
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Avoiding and Reporting Scams: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts>

FTC information:

- Consumer Alerts: <https://www.ftc.gov/stay-connected>
- Report Scams or Questionable Claims: <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>

U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)

Most Common Scams Targeting Veterans, by State: <https://www.uspis.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/most-common-scams-targeting-veterans-by-state-uspis.pdf>

Operation Protect Veterans: <https://www.uspis.gov/veterans/>

Reporting a scam: <https://www.uspis.gov/> or call 877-876-2455

Email for free brochures: ismediainquiries@uspis.gov

USPIS information:

- Website: <https://www.uspis.gov/>
- Facebook: [@Postalinspectors](https://www.facebook.com/Postalinspectors)
- Twitter: [@USPISpressroom](https://twitter.com/USPISpressroom)
- Instagram: [@postalinspectors](https://www.instagram.com/postalinspectors)
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/USPISpressroom>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

Fraud Prevention Resources: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/resources-for-older-adults/financial-education-placemats/>

Aid and Attendance Benefit Scams: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/helping-prevent-scams-targeted-veterans/>

Protect Your Identity: What Older Adults Should Know: https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_identity_protection_guide.pdf

Fake Charity Scam Information for Meal Service Providers: https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_charity-scams-handout.pdf

AARP

Scams Targeting Veterans: <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2019/veterans.html>

Veterans, Military Spouses Top Targets of Employment Scams: <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/voices/veterans/info-2020/military-families-employment-scams.html>

A Crackdown on Fake Charities Exploiting Veterans: <https://www.aarp.org/podcasts/take-on-today/info-2018/take-on-today-podcast-episode-20.html>

Other Resources

Registering a telephone number with the National Do Not Call registry: <https://www.donotcall.gov/>

Unemployment Benefits Finder: <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/Find-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx?newsearch=true>

Report Identity Theft: <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>



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